
Overview of Mental Health Supports and Services in Nassau County

The New York State mental health system is faced with a variety of challenges emanating from the fact that the high need adult and child client constitutes a growing percentage of total number of persons served. This situation underscores the requirement that we continually evolve service delivery approaches in an ever changing environment. In Nassau County we have a wide range of programs but we wish to partner with OMH to provide for a more comprehensive and responsive array of clinical, rehabilitative and residential program alternatives.

Currently, there are forty three voluntary/not for profit and state agencies that provide mental health services to the citizens of Nassau County. Some clients are seen by more than one provider but our agencies report that they serve a duplicated count of over 46,000 individuals each year. The broad categories of services offered are Emergency Services, Inpatient Care, Single Points of Entry, Case Management, Assertive Community Treatment and Intensive In-home Services for Children, Assisted Outpatient Treatment, Community Residential Programs, Outpatient Treatment, Family Support Services, Skill Development Programming, Social and Recreational Services, Self Help and Peer Support, Forensic Mental Health, Advocacy Services, Legal Assistance, Discharge Planning from Inpatient, Medication Management, Information and Referral, Professional Training and Community Education and Transportation.

Emergency Services

The objective of emergency programs is to achieve rapid psychiatric and medical stabilization, and to ensure the individual's safety. This service may be used when a crisis intervention cannot be provided by a client's current provider, or when the individual is not enrolled in a mental health program. Program categories included under emergency services are:

Psychiatric Emergency Room – Provides emergency psychiatric and medical evaluations 24 hours-a-day, 7 days a week. Clients not requiring hospitalization are referred to a community based service.

Adult Mobil Crisis Team – Functions as an alternative to a police intervention or assists police with the goal of minimizing a crisis in the community. The team evaluates the psychological condition, the functioning level, environment and safety of the individual in crisis. If needed the team will facilitate a psychiatric hospitalization or refer the client to an appropriate treatment provider in the community.

Children's Mobil Crisis Team – Provides short-term crisis interventions in the community to help reduce emergency admissions to children's inpatient programs. The team provides linkages to ongoing services, as needed.

Home Based Crisis Intervention – Provides intensive in-home services to families where one or more children are at serious risk of psychiatric hospitalization. Over a 4-6 week period the objective is to teach problem solving skills to the family, and linkage to community based supports. The counselor is available to the family 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.

Crisis Residential Services – Provides a short-term safe living environment for individuals who cannot remain in their current living environment, but whose condition does not require the structure and security of a hospital setting.

Disaster Mental Health Services – The Department's mental health disaster plan is incorporated into the Nassau County Disaster Plan. The purpose is to provide emotional support and referral services to those affected by a local or large scale disaster. The mental health response team consists of trained practitioners from our adult and children's mental health service system.

Inpatient Care

Provides 24 hour psychiatric care in a controlled environment. All programming occurs in the inpatient setting. Only individuals who exhibit the most severe psychiatric symptoms, or who require intensive inpatient evaluation are appropriate for this type of program. Inpatient care is categorized based on the amount of time a person is expected to remain in the hospital.

Acute Inpatient Care – The objective is to provide short-term treatment in an intensive hospital setting. The length of stay is as short as possible, typically ranging from a few days to up to 30 days. Upon discharge the client is linked to community treatment resources and supports.

Extended Inpatient Care – Provides long term inpatient care to individuals who are deemed as unable to function in a community setting. The length of stay is in excess of six months and when discharged the individual is connected with needed services and supports.

Single Point of Entry (SPOE) for Adults

All applications for Case Management, Assertive Community Treatment and Assisted Outpatient Treatment are processed through the Nassau County Department of Mental Health where eligibility is determined and assignments are made to the appropriate level of care.

Case Management and Assertive Community Treatment for Adults

Case Management for Adults – Provides outreach, care management and advocacy to psychiatrically disabled adults and children. Case management assists consumers in gaining access to needed medical, psychiatric, residential, social, vocational and other services that may be essential to maintaining or improving their level of functioning in the community.

Types of Case Management:

Intensive Case Management (ICM) – Is provided to clients who are “high risk” for hospitalization or homelessness. There may be drug or alcohol abuse and a forensic history as well as a serious impairment in ability to function in the community.

Supportive Case Management (SCM) – Is provided for the client who requires assistance to maintain or improve their level of functioning but is not deemed to be a high risk for hospitalization or homelessness.

Blended Case Management (BCM) – A team approach to case management where that includes ICM and SCM levels of care.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) for Adults – Serves adult clients who meet the criteria for ICM services and also demonstrate a refusal to engage in, or benefit from traditional treatment services. ACT is a multi-disciplinary team approach that includes social work, vocational counseling, drug and alcohol counseling, nursing and psychiatric care. Services are not office based; instead interventions take place at the client’s home or other natural setting.

Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) for Adults

This is a court ordered service for the adult clients who are non-compliant with psychiatric medication and as a result decompensate and are deemed unable to live safely in the community. The initial AOT order lasts for six months and if renewed the order could last for another year. Mandated services include, but are not limited to, medication management and case management or ACT. The Nassau County Department of Mental Health is required to maintain oversight responsibility for all clients on AOT orders.

Single Point of Access (SPOA) for Children

All applications and referrals for intensive in-home and out-of-home services are made to the Nassau County Department of Mental Health. Once received, it is reviewed by a committee of providers to determine the appropriate level of care.

Intensive In-Home Services for Children

Case Management for Children – Provides outreach, care management and advocacy to psychiatrically disabled adults and children. Case management assists consumers in gaining access to needed medical, psychiatric, residential, social, vocational and other services that may be essential to maintaining or improving their level of functioning in the community.

Types of Case Management:

Intensive Case Management (ICM) – Is provided to clients who are “high risk” for hospitalization or homelessness. There may be drug or alcohol abuse and a forensic history as well as a serious impairment in ability to function in the community.

Supportive Case Management (SCM) – Is provided for the client who requires assistance to maintain or improve their level of functioning but is not deemed to be a high risk for hospitalization or homelessness.

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS Medicaid Waiver) for Children – This program provides support services, skill building and linkages for children who have a severe emotional disorder. Services are delivered at home or elsewhere in the community with the goal of avoiding placement of the child in a residential treatment facility or psychiatric hospital. Respite and Parent Advocate services can be accessed through HCBS. Recipients of this service must have been psychiatrically hospitalized for thirty days over the past twelve months.

Clinical Care Coordination Team for Children (CCCT) – Provides both case management and clinical services for seriously emotionally disturbed children who have resisted or not benefited from traditional services. Care is provided at the client’s home or other natural setting with the goal of preventing hospitalization, residential placement or homelessness.

Coordinated Children’s Services Initiative for Children (CCSI) – This is a case management like program for children who are at risk of out of home placement. Children receiving this service have multi-system involvement, (i.e. mental health, child protective services, probation). A variety of support services are made available to assist the child and family in functioning successfully while living in the community.

Mental Health Court

The Nassau County Mental Health Court is a dedicated court part that seeks to craft a meaningful response to the problems posed by defendants with mental illness in the criminal justice system. Judicial monitoring is provided to assure that the court mandated treatment plan is followed by the client, and mental health case management is used to link clients to treatment programs and related services as an alternative to incarceration.

Mental Health Consultation to Family Court

A mental health consultant is available to the court (including Judges, court attorneys, law guardians, County Attorneys, Probation and DSS) for consultation on cases with mental health issues. Interviews are conducted to determine if mental health care is needed and to assist in coordinating services. Recommendations are made to the court on whether a person requires inpatient psychiatric evaluation or if an outpatient evaluation would be sufficient, and the consultant monitors the progress of children and adults who are sent to the hospital for inpatient evaluation.

Residential Services for Children

Residential Treatment Facilities RTF for Children – Provides fully integrated mental health treatment and special education services under the direction of a psychiatrist, in a structured supervised residential setting. Most youngsters are served for an extended stay, between 6 months and 2 years.

Community Residences for Children – Six to eight children reside in a group home setting that includes structured therapeutic activities. Staff in the program work in shifts and provide 24 hour awake supervision.

Teaching Family Homes for Children – A family like environment for four children. A specially trained live-in couple provides continuous supervision and a therapeutic environment and attempts to reunite the child with the family upon discharge.

Family Based Treatment for Children – Occurs when the adult supervisors in a private home are trained as “professional parents” to provide a structured and therapeutic environment for one child. Additionally, a family specialist works with the biological parents to help them develop the skills necessary to have their child return home when possible.

Single Point of Accountability (SPA) for Adult Housing

All applications for adult housing that is licensed or funded by NYS Office of Mental Health are processed through a single location using a universal application form. Decisions about client access to housing are monitored by the NYS Office of Mental Health and the Nassau County Department of Mental Health with input from the agencies that provide the residential services.

Community Residential Programs for Adults

While there is an unmet demand for residential programs, there are a number of community-based housing options that may be accessed by the adult client. These programs are operated by not-for profit agencies or by the New York State Office of Mental Health.

Community Residences for Adults– These are group homes where clients reside for a limited period. There is 24-hour staffing and individualized rehabilitative services designed to promote client independent functioning. The adult residences house 8-12 beds.

Apartment Treatment for Adults– Apartments are shared by 2-3 adults, with staff visits occurring 2-5 days a week.

Supported Housing for Adults – Apartments for 2-3 individuals with staff visits occurring on at least a monthly basis.

Outpatient Treatment

Services are delivered in an ambulatory setting and the objective is to promote symptom stabilization and enhanced functioning for individuals and families. The various types of outpatient treatment offered are:

Partial Hospital for Adults – Provides intensive short term treatment designed to stabilize and ameliorate acute symptoms, to serve as an alternative to inpatient hospitalization or to reduce the length of a hospital stay.

Continuing Day Treatment (CDT) for Adults – The purpose is to stabilize or maintain one's psychiatric functioning and enable the client to develop skills that enhance their potential for successful integration in the community. The program is available five hours per day, five days a week.

Partial Hospital for Children/Adolescents – Provides short-term intensive treatment and special education. Services are available for up to ten hours each day and up to six days per week. The intent is to provide an alternative to hospitalization or to allow a child to leave the hospital sooner.

Day Treatment for Children – This is an intensive non-residential service for children or adolescents that is available five hours per day, five days per week. The program provides a blend of mental health and special education services.

Clinic Treatment for Adults and Children – Clinic services provided include assessment, treatment planning, individual, group and family therapy along with medication management. Linkages to other services are arranged where appropriate and discharge planning is also conducted. Case management and crisis intervention is provided as needed.

Specialized School Based Clinic – Certain schools receive on site clinic treatment services and where appropriate the client is linked to other mental health supports.

Family Support Services for Children

Provides supports to a family toward the objective of enhancing their capacity to care for their emotionally disturbed child and reduce the need for long term hospitalization. The primary services offered are Respite Care and Family Support Groups.

Respite Care – Provides temporary care to a seriously emotionally disturbed child or adolescent while offering relief to the family. Respite care may be provided on an emergency or planned basis and the service can be delivered either in-home or out of home.

Family Support Groups – Offers parents' mutual support by providing opportunities to share experiences with other parents of children with emotional or behavioral problems. Information is exchanged on available treatments, causes of emotional and behavioral problems and coping with raising a child with an emotional disability. The groups are co-lead by a parent advocate.

Skill Development Programs for Adults

These services are designed to help the individual achieve vocational, educational, social or residential life goals. The following programs deliver these types of services:

Clubhouse – The Clubhouse operates with the philosophy of client ownership, meaning that each member of the program is responsible for performing a function that contributes to the running of the Club. Each client is assigned to a team that performs the work that facilitates program operations. Some of the duties performed are clerical/reception, porter/maintenance and cooking. Members of these work units develop skills and one may eventually become job ready. Individuals who reach that level of functioning can be placed in a competitive employment setting.

Job Training – This is a Department of Mental Health and NYS VESID funded service designed to assist the client in the development of the skills needed to gain employment.

Supported Employment – This entails job development - the matching of a client to a particular job; and job coaching - a support service designed to help the client maintain their employment.

Affirmative Business – This is an employment option for clients who help to run a business that is supported, to a significant degree, with income that is generated by the business.

Intensive Psychiatric Rehabilitation Treatment (IPRT) – Provides time limited skill development to assist individuals to achieve a more desired status in the areas of work, socialization, education and residential living.

Social and Recreational Services

Provides structured social and recreational activities for individuals who have difficulty making use of other community resources. Services are offered in the evening or on weekends toward the goal of improving the client's social and interpersonal skills.

Social Programs for Adults – Clients are given the opportunity to participate in group activities or other social outlets that promote interpersonal skill development and the greater use of community resources.

Therapeutic Recreation for Children – Is a structured setting designed to help children to improve their skills and to learn to get along with other children. Individualized attention can be provided, as needed.

Self Help, Peer Support

Knowledge and experiences of current and former recipients of mental health services is used to assist clients in their journey toward recovery. Outreach is provided to clients or services can be accessed through office visits or through phone contact.

Forensic Mental Health Services

The Department of Mental Health provides mental health evaluations and court testimony on individuals appearing before the County, District or Supreme Court. In addition, the Department provides consultation services on behalf of individuals in Family Court.

Advocacy Services

Individuals or families needing assistance in accessing services or with concerns about quality of care can receive support in dealing with private or government run organizations. These advocacy services are tailored to the needs of adults, children or family members.

Legal Services

Mental Hygiene Legal Services – Represents persons, at no charge, in judicial and administrative proceedings concerning admission, retention, transfer, treatment and guardianship. In addition to handling judicial proceedings, MHLS provides advice and representation regarding standards of care and other matters affecting the civil liberties of persons receiving care at facilities for the mentally disabled. MHLS can also be assigned as counsel or court evaluator in guardianship proceedings for persons in any type of facility.

Nassau Suffolk Law Services – Provides free legal services for clients with a mental illness on civil legal matters, primarily relating to government entitlement and landlord/tenant problems.

Discharge Planning from Inpatient

Specific discharge procedures are required under the laws and regulations of the NY State Office of Mental Health to insure continuity of care. Discharge plans are individually designed with client input to assure that individuals receive appropriate post hospital services. Discharge Coordinators from the Nassau County Department of Mental Health work collaboratively with the inpatient units and may participate in the pre-discharge and discharge planning conferences.

Medication Grant Program

Medication Grant Program evolved from the 1999 legislation known as Kendra's Law. The law authorized county Mental Hygiene Directors to receive grants that enable mentally ill individuals that are released from jail and prisons or discharged from hospitals to purchase psychotropic medications for up to 90 days, while a Medicaid application is pending. This program also allows the client to receive one outpatient visit for medication management, at no cost.

Information and Referral

The Mental Health Association, under the direction of the Nassau County Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, provides a comprehensive Information and Referral Service, which assists callers with information about mental health resources in Nassau County.

Training and Education

Education and training is provided for mental health professionals. In addition, educational programs are offered in the community to promote awareness of and to combat the stigma of mental illness.

Transportation

The Department contracts with a bus company to transport adults to and from their continuing day treatment or partial hospital program. The Department also provides Metro Cards to various day programs to facilitate client access to those services.